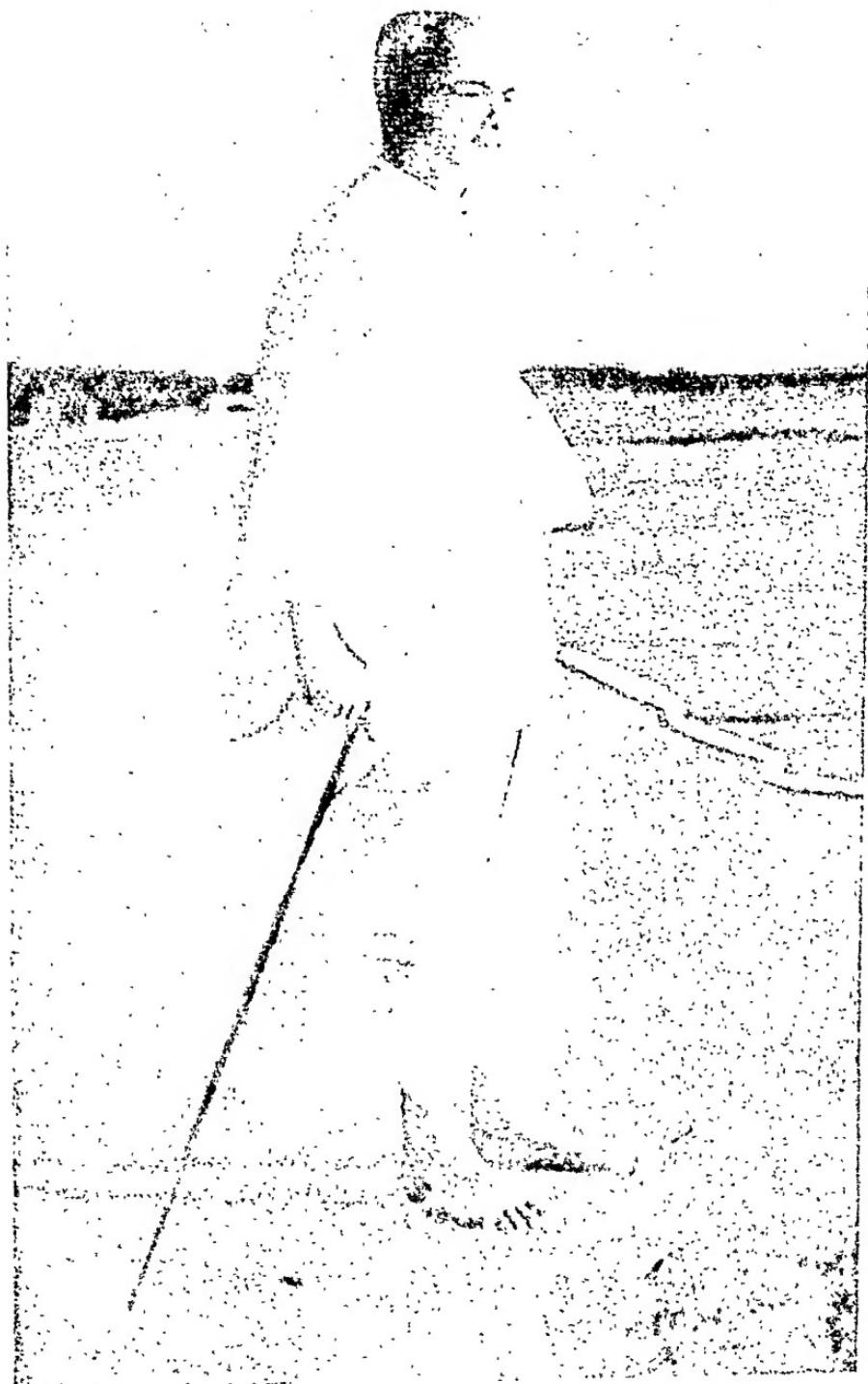


THE PERENNIAL FOUNT

(*Lyrics of Adoration And Love*)



NANALAL

(1877—1946)

THE PERENNIAL FOUNT

LYRICS OF ADORATION AND LOVE

BY

NANALAL

Translated From The Original Gujarati

BY

BALCHANDRA PARIKH

WITH FOREWORD BY

Prof. HUMAYUN KABIR,

Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

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To
KALIDASA,

the eternal poet of India,
whose luminous aesthetic vision
has found its modern efflorescence
in the enchanting muse of Nanalal.



FOREWORD

I have read with pleasure this translation of the poems of KAVIVAR NANALAL who is regarded by many as the foremost poet of modern Gujarat. Translation is always a difficult business, and it is more so in the case of poetry. Much of the appeal of poetry lies in the associations which cling to particular words. Equally important is the music and assonance of sounds. When a poem is translated into another language, it is difficult to recreate the musical value of the words. To recreate the atmosphere and association is perhaps impossible, for each word has behind it a history that reaches back into a dim and unending past. Landscape, atmosphere, social customs and racial traditions combine to give to certain words a magic quality. This magic cannot be evoked by synonyms in the same language, let alone other words in a foreign language.

The difficulty of translation is nowhere so clearly seen as in the case of lyrics. A lyric is essentially the expression of a mood. In drama, epic or narrative poetry, there are elements which are shared by many individuals. What is common to many, may be common to all. A lyric on the other hand is and must be individual. Even feelings have no place in a lyric till they are transmuted by the alchemy of the poet's personality. In fact it is the uniqueness of the poet's experience that gives significance to a lyric.

KAVIVAR NANALAL is essentially a lyric poet and sings of the simple things which add beauty and grace to life. He is keenly sensitive to the chang-

ing moods of nature, and has sought to express in words the nuances of feeling created by such moods. These moods are flitting and evanescent and give a quality of expectancy to his poems. With his refined and sensitive heart, it is not surprising that he should be moved more by the delicate and beautiful aspects of nature than by her terrible might. His poems are full of the spring and the morning light, and the gentle moon-light that bathes the world in beauteous magic. In nature, it is the beautiful and the tranquil that attract him. In life, he is drawn more by those experiences which are full of kindness, affection and love. Even when he sings of sorrow, there is in his song a note of tender yearning that softens the bitterness of anguish.

With a few fortunate exceptions, most Indian poets are known only to those who speak the poet's language. Differences of language and the fact that Indian languages did not generally receive their due recognition prevented most Indian poets from achieving anything but local fame. It was only through occasional translations that a poet could secure a hearing outside his own linguistic group. Any attempt to introduce a poet to a wider audience is therefore welcome. Such translations introduce the poet of one language and region to other languages and regions. As such they help to enrich and unify the Indian heritage.

These translations prove that in spite of local differences in text and colour, KAVIVAR NANALAL stands in the main tradition of Indian poetry. His verses are a re-affirmation of the continuity of the

Indian tradition, and at the same time a statement
of what is peculiar to the landscape and the people
of Gujarat.

New Delhi,
23 June 1952.

HUMAYUN KABIR

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“O Children, athirst for love !
Forget not Love’s immortal seal ;
It was with the impact of a sacred urge
That our Lord set bounds to the vast ocean
of Love”

—*Nanatal*



to her literary destiny by opening new channels of creative expression to the awakening minds of Modern Gujarat. It had been given to the elder of these two, the veteran poet Dalpatram, to take the lead in initiating a general movement of moral awakening, acting through the fields of social and educational life and making his appeal to the heart of the people through the supple medium of his poetry—a great instrument, indeed, in the effective propagation of his social objectives. However, although Dalpat had succeeded in establishing a genuine hold over the slowly awakening instincts of the Gujarati people, it was reserved for his younger contemporary Natnrad to set the mind of modern Gujarat afame with the stirring vision of a new life which had gripped his imagination. Poetry came to him predominantly, not as a vehicle for the propagation of his social views, but rather as a distinct gift through which to express the ideals of the coming generation, with a matchless exuberance of spirit. With the indomitable instinct of a social reformer, wedded to the buoyant fervency of a poetic imagination, Natnrad was thus destined to emerge as the natural apostle of a regenerate Gujarat whose aspirations he embodied through the unique page of his youthful spirit,—driving ahead for the full emancipation of man from the deadening shackles of a stagnant social life. And it is significant that while his elder contemporary Dalpatram has been slowly fading away into the twilight of history, Natnrad still remains the idol of the new generation—the poet marked by the star of Destiny who initiated the imaginative renaissance of modern

Gujarat, leading to an expanding liberation of her mind, as it probed into every sphere of human activity.

II

With the fresh vista of life that Narmad had thus opened up, the flowering of Gujarati literature started on the path of its modern achievement, with a constellation of stars rising on the horizon to illuminate various spheres of its creative expression during the later part of the nineteenth century. Foremost among these was Govardhanram who gave to Modern Gujarat the epic of her resuscitated culture through his grand novel "Saraswatichandra", spread over an amazing canvas of some fifteen hundred pages—the classic masterpiece of creative imagination which held the mind of all Gujarat spellbound in admiration and awe. But while Gujarati literature continued to take rapid strides under the light of this titanic symbol of an inspired vision, a new poet-visionary was in the making by the turn of the century who, surpassing all his predecessors in the breadth and splendour of his creative vision was destined to,

tion, but even to excel his father to unimagined heights in the comprehensive fulfilment of his dynamic genius, destined to rule the world of Gujarati letters as its supreme visionary and poet.

Significant of this distinguished position which Nanalal was going to hold in the world of Gujarati poetry during the present century was the outstanding honour bestowed upon him, as he was just entering his thirties, as the 'Full Moon rising over the firmament of Gujarati Literature'—a designation wherewith the veteran poet Kanta, presiding over a convention of the Literary Conference of Gujarat, greeted the young poet as he stepped in to attend the memorable session of that Assembly. It must be remembered that although during a subsequent period of some forty years, the poet was increasingly to cultivate diverse fields of poetry and drama, romance and epic, biographical study and literary appreciation, he rose on the arena of Gujarati literature as a lyricist of outstanding creative talent unrivalled for the splendour of his romantic imagination, no less than for the entralling ardour of his aesthetic appeal. The twin poetic works with which Nanalal announced his entry into the realm of Gujarati letters at the beginning of the present century were to be truly symbolic of these most prominent aspects of his growing genius, whose prime ambition was to present a perennial vision of the flowering of Man's inner spirit to the Gujarat of his dreams. "Vasantotsava"—the Festival of Spring—destined to be famous as the first lyric masterpiece of Nanalal, embodied this vision in a bewitching romance of youthful ardour, unfolded against the background of a blossoming

springtide, to gratify the deepest yearnings of young human hearts. The other work "Ketalanka Kavyao"—a collection of lyrics and odes—fulfilled the deeper need of Gujarat through an expanding aesthetic vision shedding its glow over the rare love-lyrics continually flowing from the heart of an eternal lover. Inspired by a transcendent vision of Beauty, aflame with the rapturous ardour of an adoring soul, the creative urge of the poet leaves its abiding impress on an immaculate expression of lyrical loveliness unsurpassed in the felicitous charm of its aesthetic appeal, in the magnificent texture of its poetic imagery :

The eyes of Dawn begin to stir,
Kissed by the gentle morning breeze,
And I waken thee, my Darling !
With the imprint of my kiss

— — —

See ! how the woodland leaps in life
Under the rising tide of light,
And in matchless rhythm wave,
The mango-groves sublime and grave ;
Everywhere the birds their music
Drinking at the fount of bliss,
In grand chorus join their notes
To sing in glory of the dawn.

— — —

The night, my Darling ! passed away,
In magic ecstasy of love,
Yet Providence will not accord
The day without love's due reward

The benign springs of white resplendence,
As they overflow this earth,
Greet thy presence like a river,
With its ablutions divine.

III

While Nanalal continued during this peak period of his glorious youth to hold the imagination of Renascent Gujarat spellbound with the beauty and splendour of his romantic creations, his aesthetic vision was growing more mature every day, as it sought to respond to the transcendental appeal of Beauty, as it roamed at large over the limitless fields of human idealism, as it dived into deeper instincts of human love advancing for their spiritual fulfilment towards an integral union in wedded life, and as it endeavoured to imbibe the wealth of Nature's inspiration in enriching man's creative personality with the fresh invigorating bloom of universal life. This important phase in the expanding evolution of the poet's genius was destined to take a positive shape in a number of his mature masterpieces which continued to follow each other in rapid succession during the first quarter of the present century and, through their epoch-making influence, almost completed the romantic Renaissance of modern Gujarat. Foremost among these were "Nana Nana Rasa"—a collection of serenades presented as a special gift to the women of Gujarat, disclosing a type of lyrical composition which, with its long indigenous background, had now reached its poetic summit in Nanalal, the supreme master of this peculiar manifestation of

Gujarat's lyrical genius. It was a unique distinction which this vehicle of native lyricism—Rasa—received at the hands of the poet, when he used it as a lovely flute to blow through the ardent longings of his love-laden heart, investing it with the triple qualities of poetic charm, musical lilt and accompanying dance-rhythm, all blended into a perfect aesthetic entity. It was surely an unrivalled achievement in the literary history of Gujarat, for no other poet had so far, by perfecting this indigenous poetic medium, ever won the hearts of Gujarati women to the same extent that he had influenced the hearts of men. But even while he thus continued to minister to the buoyant fervency of the new generation, satiating its deepest lyrical longings, the poet had his vision fixed on the larger idealist fulfilment of its aesthetic instincts. The loftier peaks of Nanalal's romantic imagination were not to be satisfied until they gained a direction through which to move towards a more comprehensive ideal wherein man might attain the consummation of his wider aspirations through the aesthetic union of two human hearts. And while "Usha", a splendid poetic romance, enveloped in the refulgence of a full-moon night was to image, a few years later, the fuller vision of this aesthetic union against the silvery background of magic enchantment, the poet had already started upon his enunciation of this idealist view of a progressive human life through the new medium of his poetic drama. Having invented a specific style for this purpose, designated by him as 'Dolanshaili'—the Style of Rhythmic Movement—intended primarily to keep in tune with the higher

rhythms of thought, the young poet proceeds to discuss in his first lyrical drama "Indukumar" the fundamental problems arising out of the aesthetic-idealistic view which must govern the deeper union of man and woman in life. And as he moves ahead, he discovers a perfected picture of wedded life as the centre of human fulfilment on earth, co-ordinating and assimilating into a living ideal its aesthetic urges, its romantic desires and its creative aspirations. Thus it is that Nanalal, starting as a lyrist of romantic love, progressively ripens into a visionary of wedded communion—a most beautiful phenomenon in his poetic evolution which ultimately becomes the cornerstone of his advancing vision of life. Time and again, it finds its expression in an ideal world where human beings move, invested with a poetic instinct, to seek the fulfilment of their deeper aesthetic urges in the fruition of an all-pervading spiritual communion through love. Although the poet usually employs the medium of lyrical drama as well as poetic romance to present his exposition of this ideal on a larger canvas, the loveliest expression which it spontaneously finds is through a number of lyrical odes which flow from his pen as flowers of tribute to his Eternal Beloved—the comrade in life who has stood as the unshakable pillar of inspiration to the poet in weal or woe :

Sweetheart of my life !
Ah ! Comrade of the eternal path !
Together we started on the unknown voyage
of existence.....
The lovely bud that thou nourished

Is blooming into fragrant flower,
Some of its petals spread in the open air,
And some few fallen and faded into the
dust.

As this first sweet blossom of love develops, the vision expands, yearning to pour the fragrance of divine bloom into the heart of Man's aesthetic union :

Eternal is our play, my Love !
Still expanding every day,
No less transcendent shall be then,
Our communion in active life ;

Absorbing its unearthly fragrance,
Let us pluck the divine flower,
From the perennial Tree of Life,
To engraft it on Love's sacred shrine

Thus was Nanalal to taste the deathless nectar of life in the progressive communion of the human soul, with the immutable image of its Destiny imprinted on the figure of the Eternal Woman, illuminated by the majestic splendour of a cosmic vision centring around Love—which he proclaims prophetically with an unsurpassed lyrical grandeur in the following lines :

Ah ! when the mighty gates were opened,
Leapt the whole universe in joy ;
The Sage attained his communion
With the Soul of Infinite ;

The Lover was in ecstasy,
At the fulfilment of life,
As his eyes merged into eyes
And saw Love's vision reflected there.

But even in the face of these superb altitudes of a cosmic vision, the poet was slowly realising that this immaculate urge for human communion was not to be completed without its natural obstacles, defying it on the path of progress, being met and overcome on their own ground, once and for ever. And as he probed deeper into the problem, he reached a stage where love, acting in the heart of the universe and overspreading the world of human affairs, was confronted with a grim challenge by the dark forces of the universe struggling to gain their mastery over the undercurrents of man's world. Nanalal moving towards the apex of his evolution, faced this issue with the illuminated vision of a seer and produced the final answer of man in the transcendental sublimation of love, based on its abiding aesthetic instincts, as depicted in his eminent dramatic masterpiece "Jaya-Jayanta" standing at the heart of the poet's creative work. This outstanding lyrical drama, portraying the process of love's sublimation against a background of human events, captured the imagination of all Gujarat with unstinted admiration, when it first appeared in 1914, and has remained ever since one of the few epoch-making works which have been hailed as immortal in the world of Gujarati literature.

It is noteworthy that with his vision thus soaring over the transcendental regions of human idealism,

the poet was to find a progressively larger field for satisfaction of his creative urge in the natural treasure-house of ancient Indian history and culture. In a number of poetic plays of which "Vishvagita"—The Universal Testament—stands as the crown, he presents the variegated spectacle of ancient Indian culture through a picturesque sidelighting of some of its most impressive scenes, culled from its epic and legend, so as to reveal the fundamental elements of spiritual progression reflected in a nation's culture. The poet enhances the same objective through his two Mogul plays—"Shahanshah Akbarshah" and "Jahangir Nurjahan"—the first an outstanding testament of cultural synthesis and the second an elevated romance of human love under the cloak of history. Through both of these he emphasizes the development of a new Indian culture under the shadow of a growing empire, arising out of a synthesis of the enduring elements of two different cultures, representing the common approach to life of two entirely different races. Having discovered the universal ideals of Indian culture in her ancient literature and philosophy, Nanalal also recreates them through a series of modern verse-translations into Gujarati of such literary classics as the "Meghduta" and "Shakuntala" of Kalidasa, such philosophic masterpieces as the "Gita" and the "Five Upanishads". Hand in hand with all this creative work which the poet had brought forth, plunging into the deep wells of ancient Indian culture, he continued to offer to the New Gujarat his exposition of its manifold aspects from the standpoint of a poet-visionary, through a mass of essays and studies, appreciations and addresses, scattered over

his long poetic career and covering in their broad sweep the various fields of literature and arts, philosophy and ethics, social problems and the evolution of human culture.

IV

But the highest summit of Nanalal's poetic achievement was still farther off. While he was conquering peaks after peaks of romance and ode, song and serenade, lyric and drama, the overpowering ambition of an epic poem had been silently beckoning him all along with its irresistible call. And it is, indeed, gratifying to note that the poet who had cultivated some of the abiding aspects of Indian culture through the medium of his poetic drama was now to turn to the "Mahabharata", the grand epic of the Indian people, as the fountainhead of his inspiration, seeking to impart a concrete shape to his lifelong epic ambition. Concentrating his mind on Kurukshetra, the battleground which constituted the nucleus of the Mahabharata, the poet in his fulsome vision undertook to interpret the conflict of forces working at the root of this titanic struggle, by bringing down their elementary movement to a visual focus of human implications ranging against a cosmic background of superhuman forces. Thus he succeeded not only in depicting a dynastic struggle between the two ancient family groups of the Pandavas and the Kauravas, but in exhibiting through it as well, the process of the eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil and the ultimate triumph

of good in the face of an implicit threat to its very existence. For the first time in modern Gujarati literature a poet had produced an epic poem of such inspiring magnitude, commensurate with the dignity and stature of its ancient subject and embodying fundamental human implications enriched by a profound philosophical bearing. But while the supreme urge of this epic masterpiece, "Kurukshetra"—which was to hold the crown of glory in Nanalal's creative achievement, rested in the delineation of its human conflict, all-essential to the basic struggle between the forces of good and evil, it was fortunate, nevertheless, in being invested at the same time with a universal perspective implied in the larger context of transition from one world-epoch to another, marking the end of a great age and opening a new one, embodying the progressive decline of higher elements in the set-up of human civilisation. And thus drawing his pageant of human conflict within the orbit of a wider world-cycle, the poet guides the movement of epic action eventually towards the supernal regions of a providential world-destiny where the original conflict is finally resolved in the sublime serenity of a cosmic vision shedding its light over the perturbed currents of human destiny. Gujarat can justifiably feel proud that her foremost poet had at last presented to the treasure-house of modern Indian literature an epic in the grand style, broadbased on the perspective of this triple vision and unfolding the panorama of a supreme world-conflict in the massive succession of twelve coherent books, spread over a period of some fifteen years.

With the completion of this distinguished epic, the organic evolution of Nanalal's poetic genius seems to touch the loftiest summit of its glory in the fullness of his creative vision, in the epic grandeur of his imagination, in the magnificent sweep of his expression, in the sublime elevation of his prophetic intuitions. A youth in his early twenties who had arisen at the beginning of the present century to enthral the heart of renascent Gujarat with the lyrical exuberance of his melodies had, passing through different phases of his poetic evolution and conquering various fields of lyric and romance, poetry and drama, biography and history on the way, reached at length, through a life of entire dedication to the Muse, the highest peak of renown which Gujarat had envisaged illuminating the realm of her poetic creation. Modern Gujarati literature had taken its full stride along the path of its destiny, when it initiated a new era under the twilight of the Nineteenth Century with the epic masterpiece of an earlier savant, Govardhanram which, cast in the form of a grand novel, threw its spell over all Gujarat with its matchless portraiture of the civilisation of a whole race around the nucleus of an enduring epic of human love. And with many more poets and literateurs continuing, under the beacon-light of this supreme classic of Gujarat's culture—"Saraswatichandra"—to enrich the rapidly rising treasure-house of Gujarati literature during the following generation, Destiny seemed at last to attain its fruition, after a voyage of half a century, in the next grand creation of Nanalal—"Kuruk-

shetra"—through which Gujarat realised the fulfilment of her epic dreams in a concrete shape.

*

In a short essay like the above it is obviously impossible to do full justice to the many-sided development of a great poetic genius like Nanalal. But even so, I have sought as far as possible to bring to the surface some of the salient features of his creative evolution in the hope that it will help the reader of the following lyrics attain a more intimate glimpse into the undercurrents of his poetic organism. To those who desire, however, a fuller view of Nanalal's achievement as a poet and a visionary, the author can only point to his companion work being simultaneously published under the title—"Nanalal—Poet-Laureate of Modern Gujarat"—in which he has endeavoured to present an imaginative study in interpretation of the Poet as a whole, portrayed against the background of his organic development as a visionary, eventually fulfilling the higher urges of humanity through a richer expression of its creative instincts.

Baichandra Parikh

SPRING STANDS TIP-TOE

I

The Spring stands tip-toe on the woods,
And life is spreading on new florets ;
Blossoms shoot their shafts of passion,
O my Love ! The Spring is spreading
On the flowers and the buds

II

Full of fresh life and exuberance,
The vernal breezes blow ;
Such sweet old reminiscences divine
Well up within my heart,
Attuned unto love's harp :
O Darling Sweet ! The Spring is spreading
On the flowers and the buds

III

A superb fragrance flows from flowers,
Honey hangs on leaf and blossom ;
Such fragrance sweet shoots from the mellow
Depths of every human soul ;
In hundred spouts th' rich essence flows
Of vernal life upon the woods ;
Ah, Love ! The lusty breath of spring
Whose ardour inflames the blossoming wealth
Of many a humming grove !

IV

The cuckoos from the mango-groves
Are warbling forth their dulcet songs,

Made still more touching by the notes
 Of underrunning wistfulness.
So do men's hearts press on their urge
 From human groves of hungry love,
In plaints impassioned that must quench
 The thirst that gathered right through ages.

V

The phase of moonlight every day
 Grows in splendour more and more,
So doth grow the light of soul
 In radiance more to illume the heart
The Spring stands tip-toe on the woods,
 And life is spreading on new florets ;
As honey drops from leaf and blossom,
 Flowers burgeon in bowers.

*

The Spring stands tip-toe on the woods
 And life is spreading on new florets,
Blossoms shoot their shafts of passion,
 O my Love ! The Spring is spreading
On the flowers and the buds

THE BLOSSOMING MORN

Slowly, slowly wakes the Morn to-day,

Slowly, slowly, spreads Aurora's* realm,

Slowly, slowly wakes the Morn to-day

*

Slowly, slowly sink the stars to-day

In the sombre firmament,

Twinkling, as it were, like gems

Dotted over the dark gown of Night ;

Slowly, slowly wakes the Morn to-day

*

A sublime radiance blooms to-day

From the bosom of the earth,

And overflows the fragrant Morn

*

Slowly, slowly springs to-day

From the heart of God's creation

The light divine, would blossom forth

In the life of every soul.

*

Slowly, slowly wakes the Morn to-day,

Slowly, slowly spreads Aurora's realm,

Slowly, slowly wakes the Morn to-day

* Aurora : The goddess of dawn in Greek mythology.

DAWN

I

The eyes of Dawn begin to stir,
Kissed by the gentle morning breeze,
And I waken thee, my Darling !
With the imprint of my kiss ;
Awake, my Love ! Awake and see,
What unique stream of silvery light,
So like thy radiance, flows from heaven
And, at last, permeates the sky.

II

See, how the woodland leaps in life
Under the rising tide of light,
And in matchless rhythm wave
The mango-groves sublime and grave ;
Everywhere the birds, their music
Drinking at the fount of bliss,
In grand chorus join their notes
To sing in glory of the dawn.

III

Surging from the depths of heaven
In the onrush of new life,
To illume the heart of darkness
With a radiance superbly bright;
The benign springs of white fulgence,
As they overflow this earth,
Greet thy presence like a river
With its ablutions divine.

IV

The night, my Darling ! passed away
In magic ecstasy of love,
Yet Providence will not accord
The day without love's due reward.
Shaking off thy dormancy
With eyes fully refreshed, my Love !
See, how the universe is dancing
In the serenity of dawn.

V

Tingling with a thrill of gladness,
Passing through th' refreshing air,
Bathing its tender wings in ripples
Of fresh rapture to the brim ;
What calm and serene morning breeze
Is moving over the awakened earth,
And at its gentle touch is waking
The fervent urge for Man's new life !

VI

So awaking human life,
And swinging it in love's embrace,
The immortal soul would blossom forth,
Sucking the deep essence of love ;
How bewitching in thy eyes
That mystic glow of love, my Life !
Let me kiss it eternally,
And merge it deep into my soul.

HOLIDAY OF LIFE DIVINE

I

To-day is our Holiday of Life !
Ah ! To-day is our Holiday of Life !
We are streaming in the ecstatic joy of our hearts !

*

To-day is our Holiday Divine,
Ah ! To-day is our Holiday Divine :
We are dancing in the rapture of our God's adoration.

II

The clouds rain the showers,
And the trees rain the flowers,
And the sun rains the garland of rays ;
But we here rain the soul's peerless blooms
O Pilgrims of the Divine Path !
To-day we celebrate
The Holiday of our Divine Groups.

*

Ah ! To-day is our Holiday of Life Divine,
To-day is Our Holiday of Life Divine :
We dance in the rapture of our God's adoration,
We stream in the ecstatic joy of our souls.

ADVENT OF SPRINGTIDE

1

Springtide has come to our door,
O Lord of my life !

O Lord of my life !
Springtide has come to our door.

III

A new fragrance of the Infinite
Is permeating the whole universe,
Fragrance is filling every corner of our soul
As springtide has come to our door, my Lord !
The cuckoo has been singing in an outburst of joy,
Thrilling every leaf and flower of the wood,
Thrilling the deep vault of the firmament above;
Oh ! Here is the springtide standing at our door.

III

Bright splendour is illumining the sky all over,
Its radiance is reflected in the human soul ;
Oh ! Here has springtide come to our door,
Having had her play in the gardens of the world ;
Let us also have, Oh ! Prince of my life !
Our play of love in the gardens of our hearts ;
For springtide has come to our door, my Lord !
Offering fresh hope to men's resurgent souls.

THE FLUTE

Ah ! Let us give and take the flute,
 Out of the impulse of our hearts ;
Let us exchange the flute, my Lord !
 Out of the joyance of our hearts.

*

You are the paragon of men,
 I am the pride of beauties bright;
Settled we are on the shores of life
Ah ! Let us exchange the flute, my Friend !
 Out of the impulse of our hearts.

*

You are the superb King of Life,
 I am the matchless Queen of Love ;
Ah ! Let us exalt this tidal wave
 Of love and life's exuberance :
And then exchange the flute, my Lord !
 Out of the joyance of our hearts.

CHURNING THE CURDS

[In this pastoral song the poet has masterfully touched upon that fascinating aspect of rural romance which is interwoven with the daily duties of churning the curds in the life of a young Indian shepherdess on the very threshold of courtship.]

Ah ! Churn the curds with a lighter hand,
This is not the way, my Lord ! to churn the
curds

*

The pot will crack,
My blouse will be drenched,
The necklace of pearls,
Hanging over my breast,
Will snap of a sudden,
And the gems shall be scattered ;
The pot would collapse,
And the precious butter-milk,
Flowing in a stream,
Will be lost in vain ;
The apparel of your Sweetheart
Would be sprinkled all over,
Ah, Love ! Churn the curds with a lighter hand :
This is not the way, my Lord ! to churn the curds...

A whole Jamuna* is surging in a tiny little pot,
Keep not the string so awry, my Lord !
From a tender little pot swells up priceless elixir†...
Opening the lid with a lighter hand,
Taste the nectar it offers to your heart's content :
Only churn the curds with still lighter hand,
This is not the way, my Dear ! to churn
the curds...

* The great Indian river, associated with the romance of Krishna's pastoral life in early youth.

† Elixir : Figuratively used for fresh butter.

THE QUEST OF LOVE

I

I have searched everywhere,
But found nowhere
 The Beloved of my Heart;
Until to the verge of this selfsame lake
I have come, but to no purpose.
I have roamed all day
 Through twilight woods,
Yet I have found nowhere
 The Beloved of my Life,
Till I have reached the flowery bank
 Of this same woodland grove.

II

I have gazed and gazed
 Along the track
 In the hopes of his dear approach,
This was the road
 He was due to arrive
 This evening to our love-tryst.
I have roved and roved
 Over all pathways,
But my Darling I have found nowhere.
Oh ! Where shall I meet my expectant lover,
 Where shall I meet him to-day ?
He has not come to our appointed love-tryst,
 He is to be found nowhere.

III

Day after day, through weeks and months,
I have counted the setting suns
In the endless quest of my soul's Beloved
Till to-day I have reached this hazy dusk,
Shimmering by the glow of the rising moon,
But my Lover I have found nowhere.

IV

For the echoes of his voice
I had set mine ears,
But nowhere could I trace my lost Beloved ;
These are but the notes of the same symphony
To-gether we created long ago,
Reverberating continuously
Within the realm of my mind to-day ;
Yet my Darling for whom
I've been searching so long,
I can find nowhere within their range.

V

Tired and depressed I feel to-day,
Having wandered through bush and forest ;
Oh ! Where shall I find my heart's Beloved,
For whom I have been in eternal quest ?
Two sprouts on the crest of yon blossoming creeper
Were budding into fragrant florets ;
I felt like plucking those burgeoned florets
As Nature's emblems of two wedded spirits ;

And then, as I took forth the leap to possess
Those signets twin of enduring life,
There rose unseen from the depth of the bower
The Lord of life I had cherished so long.

VI

So rose my Love, beaming all smiles,
In the mellowest bloom of exultant life,
Overwhelming the mute comrade of his heart
With the deathless flowers of abounding love.

FLOWERY VIAL

I

The moon has proffered her glorious nectar :
O Earth ! Where shall I receive it now ?
Ah ! Gardener of Life superb !
Bring me a vial of vernal florets interwoven,
I cannot take the nectar in my hands

II

There would be gaps and gaps within the bowl,
Formed if it were even of both my hands,
Joined in a conclave, all the fingers
closely intertwined ;
Then there are spots and marks upon my hands
That mar the setting of a bowl
For such exalted job ;
Bring me, therefore, O Gardener of Life superb !
A vial of vernal florets interwoven to receive
The glorious nectar proffered by the moon :
I cannot take the nectar in my hands

III

The superb elixir is flowing on,
It will be lost, if I receive it not ;
Yet if I take it in the improvised cup,
It passes equally out of the many gaps
That must remain between my fingers and
Cannot be filled in thoroughly at any cost.

Bring me, wherefore, O Gardener of Life superb !
A vial of vernal florets interwoven to receive
The glorious nectar proffered by the moon :
I cannot take the nectar in my hands

IV

The florets bear close semblance to
The flowery vials of gods ;
Bring me, therefore, ah ! Gardener of Life !
A vial wrought from the petals of their divine
blooms
Superbly interwoven to receive
The glorious nectar proffered by the moon :
I cannot take the nectar in my hands

THE MOONLIT SURGE

I

The rain is dripping on,
Ah ! lightly dripping on,
Sprinkling through my *saree*,
As it's lightly dripping on
Likewise drips the blossoming surge
Of youthful attachment,
Suffusing my bosom, as it's lightly dripping on

II

The moonlight gathers in a floodlight
through the night,
And rolls on in the onrush of a downpour
over the earth ;
Drenching some unknown lovely maiden
through her bashful soul,
Investing her virgin heart with glamour,
as it's dripping on

III

The love-enamoured autumn night,
O my sweet Friend !
Is bathing in this spreading fulgence,
That suffuses my *saree* with rare splendour
gleaming through
The necklace on my heart, as it's swiftly
flowing on

IV

The Chataka* cries out longingly
 His love-plaints in the wood,
The peacock-lute is swelling forth
 Her dulcet vibrant melodies ;
The clouds are fluttering in the sky,
 Responding to their symphony,
And my Lover's eyes are beaming
 In sweet rapture of their tunes.

V

The damsels in their many groups
 Are dancing in an overflow
Of deep delight, filling their hearts
 At the sweet cadence of their harps ;
And as the shafts flash from their eyes,
 The armoury of Love-god true,
The spellbound life of honeymoon
 Surrounds the world in ecstasy.

FESTIVAL OF SPRING

I

To-day is the Festival of the Flowering Season,
What a wondrous flow of springtide all around!
What a wondrous flow of springtide!
Let us rejoice in the Festival
Of the Flowering Season to-day.

II

In a boundless surge the tide of life moves on,
In infinite hopes the springs of joy burst forth....
Oh! Let us salute in a grateful spirit
The advent of the Festival of Life
In her flowering season to-day.

III

Blossoms are in blossom,
The creepers are dotted everywhere
With flowers in full bloom....
The boughs are hanging low with the overload of buds;
Oh! Let us exult in this exuberance
Of the flowering season to-day.

IV

The colours of springtide are flushed everywhere,
Over buds and blossoms, over sprouts and flowerets;
The festive smile is upon woodland and groves:
Oh! Let us rejoice in this merriment
Of the flowering season to-day.

V

See, the moon is rising over the terrace of the sky,
With what joyous smile does she begin her play
 Of silvery floodlight on the bosom of the earth !
Oh ! Let us greet heartily this moonlit Festival
 Of the Flowering Season to-day.

VI

The Spring is dancing with a rapturous soul,
 Filling her scented tray with flowers ;
And as she beams on with the boundless affection
 Of striving lovers to attain their union,
Let us salute this wonderful surge
 Of the flowering springtide in all its splendour !

SWEETHEART

I

Sweetheart of my life !

Ah, Comrade of the Eternal path !
Together we started on the unknown voyage of
existence . . .

The lovely bud that thou nourished
Is blooming into fragrant flower,
Some of its petals spread in the open air,
And some few fallen and faded into the dust.

II

Rate were those petals

Blossoming under the glorious light of dawn,
Though some of their comrades,
Caught in the task of life,

Have passed into oblivion.
The ecstatic fragrance that surged up
From the heart of the divine bloom,
I have gathered in the garland of petals
To greet my eternal Sweetheart.

III

To-day is the beautiful full-moon night,

Bearing the impact of my Darling's* name
And the instrument overhead is vibrating
With the melody of warbling birds :

* The full-moon night referred to in this poem, marking the first occurrence of moonlight splendour in the whole year, bears a date that happily coincides with the name of the Poet's own Darling.

UTTER SIMPLICITY

I

Who will adore utter simplicity ?

There is not a ripple, nor sparkle :
Though calm and tranquil, gracious and sublime,
Serene as your radiant countenance,
my Darling !

II

Bespangled with the tints of the twilight sky,

The quiet, slumbering Morn,
Caressing Aurora in the lap of th' ethereal heavens,
Reposes in the heart of the azure deep
Fathomless even as your eyes, my Darling !

III

Who will imbibe that loveliness ?

Who will apprehend, who will adorn it ?
Who will probe into its mysterious depths ?
—Beauty transcendent, immutable, ineffable,
Like the spirit that radiates through your heart,
my Darling !

IV

The eagles shall soar

Winging through the vast expanse of the sky,
And roam over clouds to the end of heaven,
Picking up gleams of splendour ;

THE WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

I

To-day is our wedding day, my Love !

On Baishakh's* happy moonlit fifth ;
Year after year it comes so dear to us,
Bringing back some sweet forgotten reminiscence...

II

Enveloping man's life in the bustle of restlessness,
The sea of human existence peals deep its sombre
notes ;

The world of man, answering those fateful tunes,
Goes forward on its path
To fulfil the march of Destiny.

III

You were playing in the flower-garden
looking over the shore,
Whilst I was growing, wandering over cliffs
that ranged along the beach ;
When all at once, we came to meet
Unknown upon the selfsame shore,
And forthwith started on those sands,
To play as Mother Earth's own twins !

IV

Thereafter many a lovely temple
We built in the realm of phantasy,

* The seventh month in the Indian Calendar, corresponding to April-May.

VII

Beloved mine !

The precious springtide of our life
Is slowly waning out,
The regenerative dynamic urge
Subsiding with our fading prime ;
The lofty Vision gets bedimmed
Recoiled by life's expanding scope,
And still the whole ocean lies before us,
Challenging to be crossed in time.

VIII

Notwithstanding all dismay,

We have not lived without our goal ;
See, there on the vast stretch of life
Stand forth our clear footprint-marks !
Some of those footprints will endure
As sentinels of eternal path,
Receiving from some grateful man
Their meed of blessings for that role.

REUNION

1

Slowly, slowly, come along the way,
Ah, Love ! come slowly still ;
Although the way hath not been very long,
Your tender feet, fair lady ! lotus-like
Must have been wearied down ;
Come over the beach, and view the rising waters of
the tide,
Spread far beyond our mortal human sight.

II

III

Over yon lofty mountain-peak doth rise
The time-honoured image of our shepherd-god*,
And often by that very mountain-foot we have
Stood even like a merry shepherd boy and maid;

- Lord Krishna, whose childhood was spent with shepherds in a pastoral environment.

A grand and world-exorting flute
Thence peals its solemn notes,
Against whose symphony, my Darling ! let us make
The slow-evolving music of a life divine.

IV

What tumultuous waves are surging over this flooded
tide,

Like fluttering leaves, bearing the impact of
Destiny's inexorable march !
Gathering the strands, Sweet ! running through
their scattered marks,
Resuscitate once more the immortal picture of our
gracious Lord,
Attaining sublime reunion with Laxmi's benign soul
—That peerless jewel, discovered from the
bosom of the deep.

V

Now take the ablution and invoke
The blessings of th' presiding household gods ;
Call on, as well, the world-wide witness of the
ocean-god,
To re-endorse the sacramental oath you must enshrine
Anew within the sanctuary of your
fine blooming heart.

VI

Eternal is our play, my Love !
Still expanding every day,

No less transcendent shall be then
Our communion in active life ;
Absorbing its unearthly fragrance,
Let us pluck the benign flower
From the perennial Tree of Life,
To engraft it on Love's sacred shrine

VII

Twelve moons,
Their shining orbs of rare enjewelled cups
Full of the divine nectar bubbling forth
In white surpassing radiance, must follow close
Upon each other's heel, presenting fresh
Rejuvenating elixir, before we reach
The peak of summer's exuberance in
Baishakh's happy nuptial gifts.

VIII

Thus every year, my Darling ! we must pass
Through fresh initiation toward a life divine,
Imbibing tender feelings,
Sentiments of new aesthetic life,
And absorb them all
Into an evergrowing sacrament
Of immaculate wedded life.

IX

The billows of yon immemorial sea
Are undepleted yet, fraught as they are with
matchless gems ;

Likewise, the world of human kind abounds
in precious jewels,
Awaiting at our hands, my Love ! discreetly
to be explored.

X

Slowly, slowly pace the way,
Else exhausted you will feel
By the hard, austere paths of life
Your tender feet must cover through;
Cool your raging eyes and view
The sublime spectacle, my Dear !
Of this bottomless ocean spreading
In full grandeur of a god.

VOYAGE OF WEDDED LIFE

I

This was the day, the very day, my Love !
When the twin flames, irradiating from our hearts,
Merged into one eternal flame

This was the day, ah, Beloved !
When the twin fires of Love's sacrifice
Were, like two fingers closely intertwined,
Fused into one abiding flame of deathless life.

II

Over the primal symbol that we set
Upon the altar of our wedded life,
Much penance passed we through, before we learnt
The communion of hearts; before we touched
The sublime godliness in love, emerging from
The whirling dance of happiness and pain.

III

With every anniversary of that immortal day,
We completed some part of life's great sacrament ;
And so evolved at length, when eighteen
 years were past,
The monumental Gita of our life, composed of
 eighteen parts.

IV

As in the rising waters of the sea
Are whirling countless shells cast off by countless fish,

So are men's children swirling on the tidal waves
Beating upon the shore of this vast universe.

V

My Darling ! That swirling dance awaits us still,
Though not a little we have swirled till now ;
Nevertheless, imbued with some decisive purpose yet,
We have to move along life's infinite current,
 willingly or not

VI

Weating a form filthy or transparently clean,
The waters of holy Ganges move continuously on ;
Even so, changing its hues through suffused
 shades of existence,
The stream of life moves on, decked in its
 rainbow tints.

VII

Over the current of that stream
Our little boat swings to and fro,
Ah, Love ! Take thou the helm and sail it through
The surging tide of life's turmoil.

VIII

On completing its voyage over the firmament,
The waning moon smiles heartily
 with a nectarine grace;
Like to that lovely, consecrated smile, my Sweet !
Grant me thy sacred smile, raining eternal grace.

IX

Years pass,

Rising and fading with life's ebb and flow,
Only those lovers,

Who, all along, have lived in perfect
comradeship,

Attain, at length, the crowning fulfilment of life.

THE DEATHLESS VISION

One spark is burning in thine eyes,
Yet slowly as it kindles on
Into an ardent flame, I find
Love's Vision clearly reflected there.

The lightning flashes in the sky,
And glowing bright, as it illumines
The dark array of thickening clouds,
I find Love's Vision reflected there.

Bleak were the hours of stark midnight,
Dead silence pervaded all around ;
As gleaming sparks danced in thine eyes,
I saw Love's Vision reflected there.

Ah ! When the mighty gates were opened,
Leapt the whole universe in joy;
The Sage attained his communion
With the soul of Infinite ;
The Lover was in ecstasy
At the fulfilment of life,
As his eyes merged into eyes
And saw Love's Vision reflected there.

The Testament of Faith was written
By the shafts of lovers' eyes,
Many a maid and youth shall greet it
Warmly as the light must grow,
Wherein the soul would touch the soul
And find Love's Vision reflected there.

DIVINE SWANS

Come to our lonely lakes, O Divine Swans !
 Come to our lonely lakes !
Come and revive those immemorial songs,
O Divine Swans !
 Come to our lonely lakes.

*

Ah ! Where your superb Manasa-lake ?*
 And where our shallow earthly banks !
Where your perfect milk-white forms ?
 And where our dark and rugged hills !
O Celestial Swans !
 You shall find here nothing divine,
Yet graciously to lift us up
 Out of our present lowly plight
With the soft touch of your souls benign,
 Come to our lonely hills.

*

Come to our lonely hills,
O Divine Swans !
 Come to our lonely hills !
—Merrily, oh ! merrily, with your dulcet symphonies
 Answering the undulations
 Of your rhythmic maiden pace ;

* The legendary lake of the Gandharvas—a semi-divine race, said to be inhabiting the upper regions of the Himalayas.

Ye Celestial Swans !
Enrapturing our waters so
With your perennial melodies,
Come down upon our lonely human hearts,
Come and revive your immemorial songs !

*

Come to our ragged human hearts,
O Divine Swans !
Come to our ragged hearts !
Come and revive your immemorial songs,
O Divine Swans !
Come to these ragged hearts.

A TALE OF WOE

I

Ask me not, ah ! ask me not
The tale of woe my heart hath suffered :
In the depths of human heart
There lies many a pearl unsought,
Bring not out those darling buds
Of God, only to drab their hearts;
Ask me not the sad tale of woe
My heart so far has undergone.

II

The cuckoo coos unceasingly
Out of her irrepressible joy,
The Chataka sends forth endlessly
His wistful love-plaints in the void ;
How can they apprehend their urge
Who search for cause, and not for impulse ?
Ask me not, ah ! ask me not
The sad tale of woe my heart hath suffered.

III

With the pale tears of despair
So far have I inscribed
The letters of abiding hope;
However dim and hazy they be,
Delete them not, ah ! delete them not,
For that must only desecrate
The sad tale of woe my heart has suffered.

IV.

Listen to this one bare advice,

O Warrior of heroic heart !

Struggle not at any cost .

Against thy fate's oncoming tide .

Struggle not, nor ask me too

The sad tale of woe that life must suffer :

Ask me not, ah ! ask me not

The tale of woe my heart hath suffered !

THE IMMORTAL TAJ

—A Testament of Undying Faith—

*

PART ONE

I

Is this the Bower of Eternal Union ?
Or only a heap of ashes, left of Love's broken heart ?
Is it the Crown of Queen Mumtaz' glory ?
Or only a bough, sheltering the twin birds of love ?

II

Out of the heart and soul of man,
Love's reminiscences reverberate ;
Echoing to their wistful tones,
Listen, where pines the Great Emperor !

III

Answering the notes of Krishna's flute,
With her enchanting dance,
Jamuna comes from Brindavan
To offer her tribute ;
What matchless flower of beauty blooms
On her alluring banks !

IV

Countless pairs of lovers come,
Moving over the river's flow ;
Beckoning them along their way
In the twilight of the dusk,
There stands the Great Sentinel !

V

The darkness wanes over the sky,
Blending with the fresh stream of light ;
The tide of life stirs through the world,
See, where doth rise love's Morning Star !

VI

Standing on a river's bank
That ever sings, and singing flows,
Pulsating deep with serenades
From Radha's¹ blossoming, ardent soul,
These very stones recite their chants
Of Everlasting Love !

*

PART TWO

I

Ah ! the dread of Time's serpentine grip on life !
Ah ! the mighty strategems of all-devouring Death !

¹ Krishna's Love-mate in Vrindavan, the seat of their woodland romance on the banks of the Jamuna. She is the symbol of the Eternal Beloved.

Only for Love is there no threat of death's decay ;
Love and Beauty reign supreme, invincible of death !

II

O Friend ! In this vast ocean of the world
Churned of its elixir, as of its odium too,
The Crown of Glory which adorns
The age-old citadel of Love and Death
Has its eternal seat in every human soul.

III

The burning blaze of fire,
Flashing from the high noon-tide,
Spreads on and envelops
The scorched face of this wide suffering world ;
Alas ! the flames of funeral pyre arise
In the Great Emperor's* heart ;
Doth not the volcanic fire set ablaze
The surging radiance of resplendent moon ?

IV

The whirlwind sweeps the earth,
While overhead, the thunder-clouds race on
From end to end of the beleagured sky ;
Ah me ! Over an universe so insecure
How splendid shines this Eternal Evening
Star of Love !

* Shahjahan, in the great bereavement of his life, raised the symbol of everlasting love in the Tajmahal which he built as a memorial to his departed spouse, Queen Mumtaz.

V

Countless times the sun doth rise, and set, and
 Unnumbered ripples rise on Jamuna, dance
 Yet even so, in every human breast the Lamp of
 Unflickering and pure, as doth the light of this
 rise again,
 and pass away ;
 Love burns on,
 Immortal Crown !

VI

What lies enthroned, ah ! will you say
 Within the heart of the world's edifice ?
 Is it Love's resplendent orb of light,
 Or its ghastly funeral pyre ?
 That is the truth, as well, of the Great Sacrament
 Implanted on the lovely Jamuna's bank !

*

PART THREE

I

Ah ! Even where the mighty Akbar* passed away
 at length,
 Where the Great Babar¹ lived not long to extend
 his glorious reign ;
 Where even the peerless flower, Nurjahan, must fade
 away at last,
 Unblemished blossoms on this Eternal Monument
 of Love !

*-1 The grandfather and the great grandfather of Shahjahan.

II

Ah ! then, what is its final reality ?
—A Crown of Glory and Magnificence ?
—A transcendent paragon of Beauty, Art or
Poetry of Love ?
Or else only the supreme symbol of a mighty empire ?

III

Ah ! what a wondrous life-image of Royal
Mumtaz' glory !
—In every line bearing the alluring bloom of
youthful maidenhood;
Flushed with the fresh glamorous beauty of a
new-wed bride,
Forming, as though, a perfect crystallized orb
of life's aesthetic play!

IV

v

This Exquisite Beauty-Star weaves on the
superb texture of her dance divine !

VI

All unseen trends of rising impulses move on,
To form at length a perfect entity of love ;
The reality of this universal truth is here imaged
In the fresh imprint of a lover's immortal faith.

VII

Like to a pair of Chakravaks* parted at night by
cruel fate,
Yet longingly responding over the opposite
river banks;
The Royal Pair would form a deathless union
of two longing souls,
On the two banks planting the responsive
twin of royal palaces ;
But the great Lord of Life, they did not know, alas !
Would bear no more the desired union
of the Two in One

*

THE FINALE

Like the moon's radiance
Flowing in exuberance in autumn's full-moon
night,
O Friend ! The full-moon life of wedded love may
ever shine,
As gloriously and bright !

* Indian birds said to be remaining united in couples by daytime but
parted at night by fate, to be reunited in the morning.

OCEAN AND THE MOON.

I

O you my Friend ! O boundless Ocean !

Sing something in my ears,
Sing something, as would make
Life sweet for me again.

O you my Friend ! Sing something in my ears

II

Sublime are your songs eternal,

Profound are the depths of your resounding tones;
I cannot grasp their mystic heights,

Nor view their infinite surge ;
O boundless Ocean ! Sing something

That my plain sense would apprehend !

III

Thy flute moves on, O Friend !

Revealing endless mysteries,

Whose tones I do not understand ;
I yearn for something that would go

Straight unto my heart,
O Friend ! Sing something that would go

Straight unto my heart !

IV

The pity of my lowliness

That cannot comprehend.

The expanding wealth of melody
That rises from my heart !

O Lord ! However sing something
So far unheard, sing evermore !

V

Spreading my bosom on thy breast,
I have slept through the long night;

O pour thine eternal inspiration,
Singing into my heart !

O my beloved Friend ! O Darling Ocean !
Sing something in my ears,
Sing something as would make
Life sweet for me again !

VI

Ah ! embarrassed thy face grows pale,
Yet cast me not away !

Sing on, my Friend !
Sing on thy deathless songs
For those who will respond !

VII

Yours is the task to exhort the world,
Searching for the universal truth ;
What am I before thy role,
Singing forth thy mighty songs,
Fulfilling thy great mission ?

VIII

Boundless art thou spread, my Friend !
 Magnanimous and great ;
Who am I, a tiny moon,
 Before my royal King ?
O Sing, my Lord ! Sing on thy royal songs
 Into my yearning ears ;
Sing something that would make
 Life sweet for me again.

IX

My only task has been to pour
 Immortal nectar in thy soul,
And after pouring, wane
Long before, I shall decline,
 But thou, O Friend ! sing on,
Sing thy imperishable songs !

X

Hear the thunder of the clouds,
 The thunder of the Time ;
The whole creation thunders back,
 Yet far beyond its bounds,
The mighty voice of our Lord resounds
Draw inspiration from that voice,
 And sing thy eternal song,
O Friend ! Sing thy eternal song !

XI.

O Limitless Ocean ! Sing thou on,
Sing something so sublime,
Into my soul, would make me feel
Life won for me for ever !

O my beloved Friend ! My darling Ocean !
Sing something far sublime,
Sing something far sublime !

THE WORLD'S GREAT GANGES

I

Now racing in a stormy mood,
Now flowing on in ecstasy,
Streams forth the great Ganges of the World,
Wide and far, continuous, for ever infinite.

II

The waters are of sacred lore,
Where pilgrims bathe through all springtime,
As the great Ganges of the World
Streams forth, rapt in a spell of ecstasy.

III

The selfsame stream had been the saviour
Of myriad princes of a race,*
And it shall be once more the saviour
Of the entire human race.

IV

The universe has poured its essence
Of the cosmic soul in her ;
O Pilgrims ! Breathe that essence free
Day and night, and feel the stir
Of the great Ganges of the World
Flowing on through Eternity.

* Referring to the story of Bhagiratha who, by his untiring perseverance, brought down the divine Ganges on the earth to wash the sins of his forefathers to heaven by the sanctifying touch of her waters.

THE NOTE OF THE INFINITE

I

Standing on the threshold of thy temple, my God !
I have sounded the Note of the Infinite.
Through the vast expanse of the world, my Lord !
I have sounded the Note of the Infinite.

II

I have not taken, my Lord ! the vow of the initiate,
Nor have I donned the hermit's robe ;
Only kissing thy feet as I am,
I have sounded the Note of the Infinite.

III

My bowl is empty,
But thy inexhaustible vessel is full to the brim ;
I found my alms in thy storehouse,
And I sounded the Note of the Infinite.

IV

The firmament is overcast with clouds,
And my eyes cannot penetrate through them
beyond ;
O how, then, shall they greet thy eternal serenades,
Though I have sounded the Note of the Infinite ?

V

Thou beamest, O Lord of Resplendent Glory !
Bounteous and majestic like an ocean
Grant, O grant me but a ray of thy splendour,
Who have sounded the Note of the Infinite !

VI

Mounting on the wings of life's restless urge,
Aflame with the fiery breath of my Lord,
I have sought my way through the world's turmoil,
And sounded the Note of the Infinite.

VII

What if I shall have nothing besides ?
I have obtained the boon of thy sight !
My glance has met with thine, and fired up,
And I have sounded the Note of the Infinite.

VIII

The depth of my bowl still remains unfilled,
Only the bottom hath slightly been smeared ;
But I have found the life of my life,
And sounded the Note of the Infinite.

IX

Through the vast expanse of the world, my Lord !
I have sounded the Note of the Infinite ;
Standing on the threshold of thy temple, my God !
I have sounded the Note of the Infinite.

THE NOTE OF THE INFINITE

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Bounteous and majestic like an ocean
Grant, O grant me but a ray of thy splendour,
Who have sounded the Note of the Infinite !

VI

Mounting on the wings of life's restless urge,
Aflame with the fiery breath of my Lord,
I have sought my way through the world's turmoil,
And sounded the Note of the Infinite.

VII

What if I shall have nothing besides ?
I have obtained the boon of thy sight !
My glance has met with thine, and fired up,
And I have sounded the Note of the Infinite.

VIII

The depth of my bowl still remains unfilled,
Only the bottom hath slightly been smeared ;
But I have found the life of my life,
And sounded the Note of the Infinite.

IX

Through the vast expanse of the world, my Lord !
I have sounded the Note of the Infinite ;
Standing on the threshold of thy temple, my God !
I have sounded the Note of the Infinite.

APPENDIX

For the benefit of those who would like to refer to the Gujarati originals of the poems appearing in the present collection, the following list is given, comprising the original title of each poem, together with its English counterpart, besides the particular works from which these are taken.

GUJARATI TITLE	PARTICULAR WORK FROM WHICH THE POEM IS TAKEN
<i>Fulade Vasanta Padbare</i> (Spring Stands Tip-Toe)	... <i>Indukumar—III</i>
<i>Ugechbe Prabhata</i> (The Blossoming Morn)	... <i>Jaya—Jayanta</i>
<i>Prabhata</i> (Dawn)	... <i>Ketalanka Kavyo, Part I</i>
<i>Ayushyanum Parva</i> (Holiday of Life Divine)	... <i>Vishvagita</i>
<i>Atmadeva</i> (Advent of Springtide)	... <i>Nana Nana Rasa, Part II</i>
<i>Venn Laiye Ne Daiye</i> (The Flute)	... <i>Jaya—Jayanta</i>
<i>Mabidan</i> (Churning the Curds)	... <i>Indukumar—II</i>
<i>Pritamni Shodha</i> (The Quest of Love)	... <i>Indukumar—III</i>
<i>Fuladan Katori</i> (Flowery Vial)	... <i>Indukumar—I</i>
<i>Jhina Jhina Meha</i> (The Moonlit Surge)	... <i>Nana Nana Rasa—I</i>
<i>Aje Utsava Fuladolano</i> (Festival of Spring)	... <i>Indukumar—III</i>
<i>Praneshvari</i> (Sweetheart)	... <i>Katalanka Kavyo, Part I</i>
<i>Nari Saralata</i> (Utter Simplicity)	... <i>Dampatya Stotro</i>

<i>Lagna Tithi</i>		
(The Wedding Anniversary) ...	<i>Katalanka Kavyo, Part I</i>	
<i>Punarlagna</i>		
(Reunion)	... <i>Katalanka Kavyo, Part II</i>	
<i>Apani Lagnatithi</i>		
(Voyage of Wedded Life) ...	<i>Katalanka Kavyo, Part II</i>	
<i>Rasajyota</i>		
(The Deathless Vision) ...	<i>Jaya—Jayanta</i>	
<i>Rajabansa</i>		
(Divine Swans) ...	<i>Jaya—Jayanta</i>	
<i>Puchhasho Ma!</i>		
(A Tale of Woe) ...	<i>Nana Nana Rasa, Part I</i>	
<i>Taj Mahal</i>		
(The Immortal Taj) ...	<i>Chitradarshano</i>	
<i>Sagara Sakhe</i>		
(Ocean and the Moon) ...	<i>Dampatya Stotro</i>	
<i>Jagani Jahnavi</i>		
(The World's Great Ganges) ...	<i>Jaya—Jayanta</i>	
<i>Ahaleka</i>		
(The Note of the Infinite) ...	<i>Premaksinja</i>	

